

Food First

This week sees the first Africa Food and Nutrition Day, and the Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture in Lilongwe, a fitting venue given the dramatic increase in food production in Malawi over the last five years, primarily a result of Government-led, donor supported, input subsidy scheme.

As a [recent APP policy brief](#) underscores, African agriculture has suffered from neglect and under-investment. The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) offers a way forward and deserves all the support it can get.

Critical issues for reducing hunger and malnutrition include political leadership, and policies that incentivize investment in public goods such as roads, water management, training, extension services and research. Plus willingness and capacity to address the risk of market failures, whether relating to credit, insurance or inputs.

Malawi's use of subsidies offers a compelling model of what can be done. But input subsidy schemes are not without major financial and political risks, and may anyway be better suited to conditions in some countries than others.

The path to food and nutrition security needs to be charted as a function of specific circumstances, taking into account issues such as land ownership, the status and rights of women, sources of growth and jobs other than agriculture, trade, the strength of markets. Some distinctions are important: food security is not the same as food self-sufficiency, and increased agricultural productivity or food consumption does not necessarily result in nutrition security.

Keeping food, hunger and nutrition issues at the top of the international agenda is critical. This should be self-evident, given the deprivation endured by hundreds of millions of people, and not just in Africa (see chart).

This needs to be reinforced by making the connections with pressing global issues such as financial stability including the so-called 'currency war', the risk of more trade protectionism, of a new 'scramble' for Africa's land and natural resources, inadequate investment in sustainable and green growth, and patterns of economic production and consumption that aggravate climate change.

Fairness, justice and security are at stake – not just for people in African and other countries feeling the brunt in the shape of riots and political instability, but for the world.

News Overview

[Talks in deciding the north-south boundary between Sudan's ruling party National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement have been delayed indefinitely](#), with both sides both sides accusing the other of delaying the process by failing to send officials to attend a joint boundary committee. [Analysts fear that there could be problems should there be no agreement and if there is an agreement; there will be no need to postpone the referendum.](#)

Earlier this week, amid escalating violence, [the date for the second round of Guinea's first ever democratic presidential elections has been set for 7 November](#), another postponement since the first round of voting in June. Analysts say [the delay could give the electoral commission time to fix problems found during June's first round of voting, but could also raise the chance of ethnic clashes or a new military coup.](#)

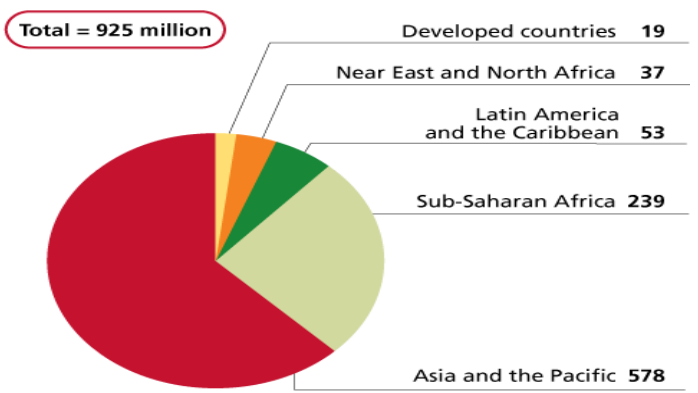
[Cholera has killed more than 1,500 people and infected nearly 40,000 in Nigeria](#) in the country's worst outbreak for nearly two decades.

[Human rights activities warn that the lives of gay people in Uganda are in danger](#), after a newspaper published a story published the names of some homosexuals claiming that they were recruiting children. And the [controversial anti-gay bill calling for stiff penalties against homosexuals may soon become law.](#)

According to latest reports, [African telecoms are the fastest growing telecommunications sector in the world, with a total investment of \\$18 billion since 2001.](#) The industry in Africa grew by 49.3 % as opposed to Asia which recorded a 27.4 % growth, and Brazil 28 %, while France grew at only 7.5%.

[The mobile phone is proving an extremely versatile tool for smallholder farmers, particularly those in remote areas.](#) It allows farmers market information as well as with basic financial services with which they can make cash transfers using their phones.

According to the FAO, the percentage of people living with very high or high undernourishment is 32% in sub-Saharan Africa and 15% in Asia & Pacific.



Source: FAO.

G8/G20 Update

CANADA

[The Canadian Minister of International Cooperation announces CIDA's strategy for sustainable economic growth to help developing countries reduce poverty](#)

CHINA

[China provides Ghana with a \\$13 billion loan with objectives of getting both fiscal deficits and debt under control](#)

[China, being one of Sudan's allies, tries to stop UN Darfur publication monitoring sanctions against Sudan](#)

EU

[The EU Environment Ministers have agreed on a negotiation strategy and common position ahead of the Cancun Climate Change Conference](#)

[The EU has allocated €17m for humanitarian needs for South Sudan ahead of the upcoming referendum](#)

[The EU has adopted its annual poverty reduction plan, including an allocation of €61.65m to poverty reduction programmes in Namibia](#)

[EU helps Togo face the effects of the global economic crisis by supporting the country with €12 million](#)

[The European Investment Bank allocates €140 million for a water supply programme in Lesotho with the aim of providing clean water for 385,000 people by 2013](#)

G20

[G20 members are asked to increase contributions to a fund to help poor countries achieve food security](#), amid fears that aid promises are being broken

JAPAN

[Japan will continue to support Botswana through the commitments made by TICAD and will consider providing loans for a regional infrastructure project](#)

MEXICO

[Mexico declares its dedicated commitment to COP16 and tries to give impetus to the climate change negotiations](#)

UK

[DFID presented its 2010 Spending Review, saying that the UK government's commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on ODA has been fulfilled.](#) The spending review is said to be [a seismic political event, which will reduce planned spending by £81 billion a year up to 2014-15](#)

USA

The US Special Envoy to Sudan holds [Sudan Panel Discussion](#) with NGO experts and [highlights actions that needs to be taken to ensure a peaceful referendum](#)

Multilateral Organizations

AfDB

[The AfDB has approved a \\$10m loan to the African Guarantee Fund to help small and medium size businesses in Africa gain better access to credit](#)

[The AfDB gets high level African support for the establishment of a Green Fund](#)

AU

[The AU has launched the Africa Women's Decade 2010-2020", calling on African leaders to take their commitments to women and development seriously](#)

[The AU, UNECA and AfDB, launched the ClimDev-Africa; a joint initiative aimed at guiding the effective integration of climate information and services into development planning](#)

GLOBAL FUND

[The African private sector contributes \\$250,000 to the Global Fund, representing the first ever donation by African private sector partners](#)

IMF

[IMF Regional Economic Outlook for sub-Saharan Africa 2010 says that sub-Saharan Africa's accelerating economic growth is expected to be broad based in 2010 and 2011](#)

UN

[UN Sec-General appeals to the international community to find sustainable ways of supporting the peace and security initiatives on the continent](#)

[UN mobilizes aid to help the more than 1.8 million people affected by the severe flooding in West and Central Africa, Benin being the country hardest hit with over 700,000 persons affected](#)

[The UN sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire have been extended for another 6 months](#)

[On the occasion of the World Food Day the UN calls for a united front against hunger to help the nearly one billion suffering from food shortages](#)

[The WFP in support of the Rockefeller Foundation launches Africa Risk View – a platform that keeps real-time information on rainfall and its impact on local farmers to help anticipate droughts in Africa](#)

WHO

[The misery and disability caused by a group of chronic infectious diseases found in very poor populations can now be substantially reduced, according to a new WHO report](#)

World Bank

[WB Annual Report 2010](#), show the Bank's support to low-carbon investments have increased to \$3.9 billion in 2010 from \$2.4 billion in 2009

Opinions

[The Washington Post: We can prevent the next Darfur, 17 Oct. 2010](#)

George Clooney and John Prendergast express fear of what might happen if the January referendum in the South is delayed and call for a more robust diplomacy by the United States and the international community as negotiations aimed at resolving outstanding issues have stalled.

[IPS News Service: Food Empires Creating Agricultural Crisis, 18 Oct. 2010](#)

A Dutch professor, Jan-Douwe van der Ploeg, argues that the real cause behind the permanent food and agricultural crisis is the imperial food regimes, whom with their short term policies undermine the very agriculture they need.

[Financial Times: Lusaka accused of mine collusion, 19 Oct. 2010](#)

A Zambian opposition leader has accused the government of "colluding" with China in the abuse of the country's workers after two Chinese were arrested for shooting 11 of their employees. Zambia is one of several African countries where Chinese companies have been accused of paying slave wages and routinely ignoring safety regulations and labour laws.

AFRICA BETWEEN DROUGHTS AND FLOODS



[Financial Times: Ways to improve Africa's business culture, 21 Oct. 2010](#)

Author highlights the challenges to doing business across Africa and argues that the central challenge is forging partnership between governments, the private sector and development community that will sustain progress.

In the blogs...

[Reuters Blog: Bill & Melinda showcase living proof of "smart aid"](#)

American Billionaire Philanthropists present a campaign to "bust the myths" about aid and highlights what they consider is working well in development.

[The-african.org Blog: Cote D'Ivoire: Finally a Light at the End of the Tunnel?](#)

The author expresses optimism that the opportunity to re-map Côte d'Ivoire's socio-political and economic future will be possible should the scheduled Presidential elections effectively take place on Oct.31 after been postponed 6 times in the past five years.

[IFAD Social Reporting Blog: Smallholders, Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agriculture](#)

In the light of the challenges of multiplied climate risk and uncertainty, smallholder farmers are the key agents not only of economic growth and food security, but also of better management and preservation of the environment- they need support to fight hunger.

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Along with health, agricultural productivity is one of the most basic things that can help the poor move to a more prosperous life...

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Bill Gates, American Business Magnate

Reports

[Perceptions of Corruption Index](#) shows corruption siphons off 20-30% of funding for basic services and tackling it should be higher on the international development agenda as it will hamper the achievement of the MDGs.

[Human Rights Watch Report](#) accuses the government of Ethiopia, one of the world's biggest recipients of foreign aid, of using development aid to suppress political dissent.

The Montpellier Panel has launched a report titled ["Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development"](#), calling for Europe to accelerate agriculture aid to Africa or miss a rare opportunity to help transform food security across the continent.

Calendar

29 October	African Food And Nutrition Security Day
31 October	Côte d'Ivoire & Tanzania: Presidential Elections
31 Oct- 5 Nov	Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change : The Hague, Netherlands
1-5 November	First All-African Energy Week on "Energy Infrastructure and Services in the Context of Climate Challenges." Maputo, Mozambique
2-3 November	ITU Symposium on ICTs and the Environment & Climate Change : Cairo, Egypt
4-5 November	Global Social Business Summit : Wolfsburg, Germany
8-11 November	Global Forum on Migration & Development: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
10-13 November	14th International Anti-Corruption Conference 2010 on restoring trust- Global action for transparency: Bangkok, Thailand
11-13 November	G20 Summit: Seoul, Republic of Korea

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